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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Great Meadows, Assabet River, and Oxbow

*National Wildlife
Refuges*

Birds



Baltimore oriole
Dave Brezinski/USFWS

Birding at Great Meadows, Assabet River, and Oxbow National Wildlife Refuges



Red-tailed hawk

The Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex is made up of eight national wildlife refuges throughout Massachusetts. This checklist has been developed for three of the Eastern Massachusetts Complex's inland refuges located on the Sudbury, Concord, Nashua, and Assabet Rivers. Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge is located in the towns of Sudbury, Wayland, Lincoln, Concord, Framingham, Bedford, Carlisle, and Billerica; Oxbow NWR is located in the towns of Harvard, Shirley, Lancaster, and Ayer; and the Assabet River NWR is located in the towns of Sudbury, Maynard, Hudson, and Stow.

The three refuges are composed of approximately 7,000 acres of diverse habitat, including open water, marshes, and uplands. The wetland portions receive heavy use by waterfowl during the fall migration. All of the over 220 species of birds listed here have been recorded in the past ten years.

Red-bellied woodpecker



Neotropical Migratory Birds

Neotropical migratory birds are those species that nest in the United States or Canada, and spend the winter primarily south of our border in Mexico, Central or South America, or in the Caribbean. Many of them, including conspicuous or colorful hawks, hummingbirds, warblers, and tanagers, and less colorful but no less important flycatchers, thrushes, and vireos, are experiencing population declines due to widespread loss of habitats important for their survival. Preservation of many different habitats for nesting, wintering, and migratory stopover sites, like our refuges, are becoming vital for the survival of many of these birds.

Red-winged blackbird



This list was prepared in cooperation with the Massachusetts Audubon Society, with assistance from author Richard Walton and other knowledgeable local birders. Species are listed in accordance with the seventh edition A.O.U. checklist and the 49th supplement to that checklist.

Symbols used in this list are defined as follows:

Occurrence

Sp Spring March - May
S Summer June - August
F Fall September - November
W Winter December - February

Abundance

a Abundant
 A species which is very numerous.
c Common
 likely to be seen or heard in suitable habitat.
u Uncommon
 Present, not certain to be seen.
o Occasional
 Seen only a few times during a season
r Rare
 may be present but not every year
x Accidental
 Species outside normal migration /wintering range.
 • Nesting Species
 * Exotic (introduced or escaped)



Green heron

Eugene F. Hester/USFWS

Ducks, Geese, and Swans

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Snow Goose	r		r	
___ • Canada Goose	a	c	a	c
___ Mute Swan	r	r	r	
___ • Wood Duck	c	o	a	r
___ • Gadwall	o	o	o	o
___ Eurasian Wigeon	r		r	
___ American Wigeon	u		c	r
___ • American Black Duck	c	u	a	o
___ • Mallard	a	c	a	u
___ • Blue-winged Teal	o	o	o	
___ Northern Shoveler	o		o	
___ Northern Pintail	u		u	o
___ • Green-winged Teal	c	o	a	o
___ Canvasback	r		r	
___ Redhead	r		r	
___ Ring-necked Duck	a		o	
___ Greater Scaup	r		r	
___ Lesser Scaup	r		r	
___ Bufflehead	u		o	r
___ Common Goldeneye	u		r	r
___ Barrow's Goldeneye				x
___ Hooded Merganser	u	r	o	o
___ Common Merganser	u		u	c
___ Ruddy Duck	r		o	

Gallinaceous Birds

___ • Ring-necked Pheasant*	u	u	u	u
___ • Ruffed Grouse	u	u	u	u
___ Wild Turkey	r	r	r	r

Loons

___ Common Loon	r		r	
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Grebes

___ Pied-billed Grebe	u		u	u
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Cormorants

___ Double-crested Cormorant	u		u	
___ Great Cormorant				x

Hérons, Bitterns, and Allies

___ • American Bittern	u	u	u	
___ • Least Bittern	o	o	r	
___ Great Blue Heron	u	c	c	o
___ Snowy Egret		r	r	
___ Little Blue Heron		r		
___ Cattle Egret	r		r	
___ • Green Heron	u	u	c	
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron	r	c	u	
___ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron		r	r	
___ Great Egret	u	c	c	o

	Sp	S	F	W
Ibises				
___ Glossy Ibis	r	r	r	
Vultures				
___ Turkey Vulture	o	o	o	
Hawks, Kites, and Eagles				
___ Osprey	u	r	u	
___ Bald Eagle	r		r	r
___ Northern Harrier	o	r	u	r
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk	o		u	o
___ Cooper's Hawk	r		r	r
___ Northern Goshawk	o	o	o	o
___ Red-shouldered Hawk	o	r	r	
___ •Broad-winged Hawk	u	u	c	
___ •Red-tailed Hawk	c	c	c	c
___ Rough-legged Hawk	r			r
Falcons				
___ •American Kestrel	u	u	u	u
___ Merlin	r		o	
___ Peregrine Falcon	r		o	
Rails, Gallinules, and Coots				
___ King Rail	r	r	r	
___ •Virginia Rail	u	u	u	r
___ •Sora	u	u	u	r
___ •Common Moorhen	r	r	r	
___ American Coot	o		o	r
Plovers				
___ Black-bellied Plover			r	
___ American Golden-Plover			r	
___ Semipalmated Plover	r		o	
___ •Killdeer	c	u	c	

Yellow warbler



Donna Dewhurst/USFWS

	Sp	S	F	W
Sandpipers, Phalaropes, and Allies				
___ Greater Yellowlegs	o	r	o	
___ Lesser Yellowlegs	r	o	o	
___ Solitary Sandpiper	u	u	u	
___ •Spotted Sandpiper	u	c	u	
___ Upland Sandpiper	r		r	
___ Hudsonian Godwit			x	
___ Ruddy Turnstone	r		r	
___ Sanderling	r		r	
___ Semipalmated Sandpiper	r	o	o	
___ Western Sandpiper			r	
___ Least Sandpiper	o	o	o	
___ White-rumped Sandpiper	r		r	
___ Baird's Sandpiper			x	
___ Pectoral Sandpiper	o	u	u	
___ Dunlin	r		r	
___ Stilt Sandpiper			r	
___ Ruff	x		x	
___ Wilson's Snipe	u	u	r	
___ •American Woodcock	u	o	u	r
___ Wilson's Phalarope	r	r	r	
___ Red-necked Phalarope	x		x	
___ Red Phalarope	x		x	
Gulls and Terns				
___ Bonaparte's Gull	r	r		
___ Ring-billed Gull	u	u	u	
___ Herring Gull	c	c	c	c
___ Great Black-backed Gull	o	o	o	c
___ Black Tern	r	r		
Doves				
___ •Rock Pigeon*	u	u	u	o
___ •Mourning Dove	c	c	c	c
Cuckoos				
___ •Black-billed Cuckoo	u	u	u	
___ •Yellow-billed Cuckoo	o	o	o	
Typical Owls				
___ •Eastern Screech-Owl	u	u	u	u
___ •Great Horned Owl	u	u	u	u
___ •Barred Owl	r	r	o	o
___ •Northern Saw-whet Owl			u	u
___ Long-eared Owl		r		r
___ Short-eared Owl			r	
___ Snowy Owl	r	r		
Nightjars				
___ Common Nighthawk	u		u	
___ Whip-poor-will	r	r	r	
Swifts				
___ Chimney Swift	c	c	u	

	Sp	S	F	W		Sp	S	F	W
Hummingbirds					Creepers				
• Ruby-throated Hummingbird	o	o	u		• Brown Creeper	u	u	u	u
Kingfishers					Wrens				
• Belted Kingfisher	u	u	u	u	Carolina Wren	o	o	o	o
Woodpeckers and Allies					• House Wren	c	o	u	
Red-headed Woodpecker				r	Winter Wren	r		o	r
Red-bellied Woodpecker	r	r		r	Sedge Wren	r	r	r	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	r			r	• Marsh Wren	c	c	u	r
• Downy Woodpecker	c	c	c	c	Kinglets				
• Hairy Woodpecker	u	u	u	u	Golden-crowned Kinglet	o		u	o
• Northern Flicker	c	c	c	o	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	c		c	r
Pileated Woodpecker	o	o	o	o	Gnatcatchers				
Tyrant Flycatchers					• Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	o	o		
• Eastern Wood-Pewee	u	u	o		Thrushes				
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			r		• Eastern Bluebird	o	o	o	o
• Alder Flycatcher	r	r			• Veery	u	u	o	
• Willow Flycatcher	u	c			Gray-cheeked Thrush	o		o	
Least Flycatcher	r	r			Bicknell's Thrush	r		r	
• Eastern Phoebe	c	c	u		Swainson's Thrush	u		u	
• Great Crested Flycatcher	u	c			Hermit Thrush	u	o	u	r
• Eastern Kingbird	c	c	o		• Wood Thrush	c	u	u	
Shrikes					• American Robin	c	c	c	u
Northern Shrike	o		o	o	Mockingbirds and Thrashers				
Vireos					• Gray Catbird	c	c	u	r
White-eyed Vireo	r	r			• Northern Mockingbird	c	c	c	c
• Yellow-throated Vireo	o	o			• Brown Thrasher	o	o	o	r
Blue-headed Vireo	o		o		Starlings				
• Warbling Vireo	c	c	o		• European Starling*	a	a	a	a
• Red-eyed Vireo	c	c	c		Pipits				
Crows and Jays					American Pipit	r		o	
• Blue Jay	c	a	a		Waxwings				
• American Crow	c	c	a	a	Bohemian Waxwing				x
• Fish Crow	u	u	u	u	• Cedar Waxwing	u	u	c	o
• Common Raven	u	u	u	u	Wood-Warblers				
Larks					• Blue-winged Warbler	o	o		
Horned Lark	r		r		Golden-winged Warbler	r			
Swallows					Tennessee Warbler	o		o	
Purple Martin	r				Nashville Warbler	u	r	o	
• Tree Swallow	a	c	a		Northern Parula	o		o	
• No. Rough-winged Swallow	o	r	r		• Yellow Warbler	c	a	o	
• Bank Swallow	c	c	u		• Chestnut-sided Warbler	o	r	o	
Cliff Swallow	o	o	o		Magnolia Warbler	u		o	
• Barn Swallow	a	c	a		Cape May Warbler	o		o	
Chickadees and Titmice					Black-throated Blue Warbler	o	r	o	
• Black-capped Chickadee	c	c	a	c	Yellow-rumped Warbler	c		c	o
• Tufted Titmouse	c	u	c	c	Black-throated Green Warbler	u		u	
Nuthatches					Blackburnian Warbler	o	o		
Red-breasted Nuthatch	o	r	u	o	Pine Warbler	u	o	r	
• White-breasted Nuthatch	c	c	c	c	• Prairie Warbler	o	o	o	
					Palm Warbler	c		u	r

	Sp	S	F	W
___ Bay-breasted Warbler	o		o	
___ Blackpoll Warbler	o		a	
___ •Black-and-white Warbler	c	o	o	
___ •American Redstart	o	o	u	
___ Prothonotary Warbler	r	r		
___ •Ovenbird	u	u	o	
___ Northern Waterthrush	u	r	u	
___ Mourning Warbler	r	r		
___ •Common Yellowthroat	c	c	c	r
___ Wilson's Warbler	o		o	
___ Canada Warbler	o			
___ Yellow-breasted Chat	r		r	
Tanagers				
___ •Scarlet Tanager	c	u	o	
Sparrows				
___ •Eastern Towhee	c	u	u	r
___ American Tree Sparrow	u		c	c
___ •Chipping Sparrow	u	c	u	
___ •Field Sparrow	u	u	u	u
___ Vesper Sparrow	r		r	
___ Savannah Sparrow	u	r	c	r
___ Nelson's Sparrow			o	
___ Fox Sparrow	o		o	r
___ •Song Sparrow	c	c	c	u
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	r		u	
___ •Swamp Sparrow	c	c	c	o
___ White-throated Sparrow	c		c	o
___ White-crowned Sparrow	o		o	
___ Dark-eyed Junco	c		c	c
___ Snow Bunting	r		r	r

Birding can be fun for everyone.



Steve Hillebrand/USFWS

	Sp	S	F	W
Cardinals				
___ •Northern Cardinal	c	c	c	c
___ •Rose-breasted Grosbeak	c	u	o	
___ •Indigo Bunting	o	o	o	
___ Dickcissel			r	
Blackbirds				
___ •Bobolink	u	u	u	
___ •Red-winged Blackbird	a	a	a	o
___ Eastern Meadowlark	r	r	r	r
___ Rusty Blackbird	c		c	r
___ •Common Grackle	c	c	a	r
___ •Brown-headed Cowbird	c	c	c	o
___ Orchard Oriole	o	o		
___ •Baltimore Oriole	c	u	o	
Finches				
___ Pine Grosbeak				r
___ Purple Finch	o	r	o	o
___ House Finch	u	u	c	u
___ Common Redpoll	r			r
___ Pine Siskin	r		r	r
___ •American Goldfinch	c	c	c	o
___ Evening Grosbeak			r	r
Old World Sparrow				
___ •House Sparrow*	c	c	c	c

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Chipping sparrow



Dave Menke/USFWS